

Applicant: JACQUIN *et al.*
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REMARKS

In response to the Final Office Action mailed February 15, 2006 (hereinafter "Final Action"), claims 17, 22, and 27 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 8-9, 18-21, and 23-26 have been amended. No claims have been newly added. Therefore, claims 8-9, 18-21, and 23-26 are pending. Support for the instant amendments is provided throughout the as-filed Specification. Thus, no new matter has been added. In view of the foregoing amendments and following comments, allowance of all the claims pending in the application is respectfully requested.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

A Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement was filed by Applicants on February 9, 2006. To date, however, Applicants have yet to receive a copy of the Form PTO-1449 (that accompanied this submission) signed and initialed by the Examiner indicating that the cited references were considered. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide a signed and initialed copy of the Form PTO-1449 for this submission with the next Office Action.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 8-9, 17-19, 22-24, and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,439,723 to Tano in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,050,695 to Fromm [Final Action, pg. 2, ¶2]. Claims 21 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over the combination of Tano and Fromm,

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further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,445,132 to Ford [Final Action, pg. 3, ¶3]. Applicants disagree with the propriety of the rejection. However, *solely* in an effort to expedite prosecution, the claims have been amended to more clearly reflect points of novelty to better distinguish over the references of record.

In particular, independent claims 8 and 9 recite that each plush animal-shaped friendship object comprises a body having a head and a tail, and a connecting mechanism that enables multiple plush animal-shaped friendship objects from different pairs of plush animal-shaped friendship objects to be linked together. Independent claims 8 and 9 further recite that the connecting mechanism comprises a first connection component extending from an upper surface of the body between the head and the tail, and a second connection component associated with a lower surface of the body.

Neither Tano nor Fromm, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach, or suggest *at least* the foregoing features of independent claims 8 and 9. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 8 and 9 is earnestly sought. Dependent claims 18-21 and 23-26 are allowable because they depend from allowable independent claims, as well as for the further features they recite.

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CONCLUSION

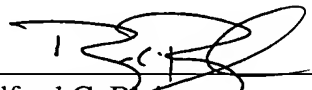
Having addressed each of the foregoing rejections, it is respectfully submitted that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the application is in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Date: May 15, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By:



Bradford C. Blaise
Registration No. 47,429

PILLSBURY WINTHROP SHAW PITTMAN LLP
P.O. Box 10500
McLean, Virginia 22102
Direct Dial: 703-770-7741
Main: 703-770-7900
Fax: 703-770-7901